The Evaluation of Cultural Intelligence Enhancement Through Documentary Videos for L2 Acquisition[1]

Liqaa Habeb Al-Obaydi[2], University of Diyala, Diyala, Iraq

Marcel Pikhart[3], University of Hradec Kralove, Hradec Kralove, Czech Republic

Abstract

Intercultural communication plays a crucial role in second language (L2) acquisition as it always happens in the context of another, usually very different culture. The present study sheds light on the benefits of using documentary videos in teaching intercultural communication to young students and how they can affect students' development of their cultural competence. The study research sample consisted of two groups of fifth-grade primary school students, with thirty participants each. Their prescribed book of English consisted of various parts related to different countries and their local culture. Therefore, documentary videos could be considered as adequate supplementary material. Data collection method was based on ideas adapted from The Cultural Intelligence Scale (CIS) (2005). In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted to reveal students' details and subjective feelings in addition to their attitudes and opinions. The t-test was used to reveal statistically significant the differences between the two groups. Results suggested that using documentary videos in teaching culture enhances students' cultural intelligence. Moreover, they show that the students had a positive attitude towards using documentary videos in teaching culture, which can significantly stimulate their motivation. This paper can be a pilot study that will stimulate further research into the needed topic.

Resumen

La comunicación intercultural juega un papel crucial en la adquisición de una segunda lengua (L2), ya que siempre ocurre en el contexto de otra cultura que, generalmente, es muy diferente. El presente estudio arroja luz sobre los beneficios del uso de videos documentales en la enseñanza de la comunicación intercultural a estudiantes jóvenes y cómo pueden afectar el desarrollo de la competencia cultural de los estudiantes. La muestra de investigación del estudio estuvo conformada por dos grupos de estudiantes de quinto grado de primaria, con treinta participantes cada uno. Su libro prescrito de inglés constaba de varias partes relacionadas con diferentes países y su cultura local. Por lo tanto, los videos documentales podrían considerarse como material complementario adecuado. El método de recopilación de datos se basó en ideas adaptadas de The Cultural Intelligence Scale (CIS) (2005). Además, se realizaron entrevistas en profundidad para revelar detalles y sentimientos subjetivos de los estudiantes, además de sus actitudes y opiniones. Se utilizó la prueba t para revelar las diferencias estadísticamente significativas entre los dos grupos. Los resultados sugirieron que el uso de videos documentales en la enseñanza de la cultura mejora la inteligencia cultural de los estudiantes. Además, muestran que los estudiantes tenían una actitud positiva hacia el uso de videos documentales en la enseñanza de la cultura, lo que puede estimular significativamente su motivación. Este documento puede ser un estudio piloto que estimulará más investigaciones sobre el tema necesario.

Introduction

According to Yule (2010), culture refers to "all the ideas and assumptions about the nature of things and people that we learn when we become members of social groups" (p. 267), Culture definition can include "literature, art, and music" (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 138). According to Byram (2008), culture is a social group's shared beliefs and practices. This definition can be applied to a whole community or a small group of people. Kramsch and Zhu Hua (2016) demonstrated that language is used as a symbolic system capable of constructing and influencing symbolic realities such as values, perceptions, and identities through discourse, rather than only via transferring information. Therefore, the concept of culture is naturally connected to language. Generally, language could be seen as a manifestation and representation of multiple cultural values shared by the nation or a group of users of the given language. Thus, to understand the language, foreign language learners need to appreciate/master the culture. Culture awareness is the only way to use the language correctly and comprehend the users of the language and what information they want to convey.

Studying foreign cultures in a simulated environment, according to Sodnomdarjaa (2006), occurs when learners' exposure to foreign culture occurs within their native one, as in the present study. In the English context, this concept is known as English as a foreign language (EFL), explained by Brown (2007) as "English in one's own culture with few immediate opportunities to use the language within the environment of that culture" (p. 205) Consequently, cultural education becomes necessary, and the interaction between studying the language and culture is pivotal, as stated by Rahman and Letlora (2018). As they claim, the interaction

between the first language (L1) and second language (L2) is always conducted on the level of culture, and understanding the language depends on culture awareness. For this reason, Hymes (1996) focuses on the idea that knowledge of culture is essential to language learning, and scholars widely accept the idea. This is because it is related directly to the norms of speaking, the way of interaction, the values and traditions of the community, and the sociocultural expectations of an individual's roles. Brown (2001) adds, "whenever you teach a language, you also teach a complex system of cultural customs, values, and ways of thinking, feeling and acting" (p. 64). Peterson & Coltrane (2003) mention that language learners should be aware of culturally appropriate methods to approach people, express thanks, make requests, and agree or disagree with someone, among other things. The focus of this concern occurs partly on how cultural diversity positively affects students' cultural awareness and how the teacher is responsible for creating a positive atmosphere of teaching culture in class, as stated by Al-Obaydi (2019). The intercultural misunderstanding caused by insufficient knowledge of the given culture is notorious. Hence, all teachers and students must possess cultural knowledge from the beginning when they start teaching or learning a language, respectively.

Teaching foreign cultures to EFL students leads to raising their cultural awareness, which as discussed by Burchum (2002), "refers to the developing consciousness of culture and the manners in which culture shapes values and beliefs" (p. 37). Villegas and Lucas (2002) describe it as the capacity that enables a person to be aware of their own values, beliefs, and unique features and understand that others' values and beliefs may differ. In education, cultural awareness manifests when students study specific foreign cultures and infer that their values, traditions, and beliefs differ from culture to culture. A study by Brown (2007) asserts the positive effects of cultural awareness in teaching language. For example, Savignon and Sysoyev (2004) used different sociocultural techniques in teaching their Russian students the English language, such as using diplomacy in inquiries and anticipating cultural misunderstandings. All these aspects are well reflected in intercultural business communication established two decades ago in many American and European universities to enhance business communication and eradicate potential pitfalls of communication across national, thus cultural, borders.

This study focuses on the use of documentary videos in teaching culture for secondary school students as part of the students' daily use of iPads, computers, and smartphone applications. Al-Obaydi (2020) recommends using videos in a language teaching context, stating that "learners actively engaged and tried to understand what was going on in the video. This led to a greater concentration on the content, which make learners focus on each word" (p. 1108).

Roell (2010) confirms that the use of videos and films is suitable to assist the teachers' insertion of intercultural learning in their teaching environment. For these reasons using documentaries, needs to be tested to see its impact on the students' level of understanding. Thus, this study investigates whether there is an impact of teaching culture using documentary videos on enhancing students' cultural intelligence and what kind of impact this could be.

In this study, cultural intelligence is a person's effectiveness in performing in a multicultural community where "individuals easily and effectively adapt their views and behaviors cross-culturally" (Ang et al., 2011, p. 582). These authors add that cultural intelligence is a theoretically supported, thorough, and logical framework that measures several facets of intercultural competence. Ng et al. (2012) view cultural intelligence as a collection of abilities that focuses on handling cross-cultural difficulties and includes mental, motivational, and behavioral components. This study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What is the impact of using documentary videos as supplementary material on EFL primary school students' cultural intelligence?

2. What are the attitudes and subjective opinions of fifth-grade primary school students towards using documentary videos in teaching culture and intercultural communication? How much will this lead to their increased motivation and interest?

Literature Review

Overall, the process of teaching culture can be both implicit and explicit. Peterson and Coltrane (2003) clarify that culture is taught implicitly in various ways, as it is embedded in the linguistic forms that pupils are learning. However, they add that cultural items can work well as a topic for discussion to make the learners aware of cultural topics. All current L2 or EFL textbooks, such as those published by Oxford University Press and Cambridge University Press, implement this teaching and embed some cultural learning. This applies to various levels of textbooks, from beginners to advanced.

Hadley (2003) mentions the main reasons that prevent teaching culture from being a systematic study in schools. The first one is that it is time-consuming. The second represents teachers' fears of teaching a specific culture because they do not have enough information about it. The last reason is that teaching culture deals with students' attitudes which may create a sharp contrast in themselves when they see the values and the ways of thinking and feeling of others are different from their own

Futhermore, teaching culture has various benefits. Hinkel (2001) mentions that "the most important long-term benefits of teaching culture may be to provide learners with the awareness and the tools that will allow them to achieve their academic, professional, social, and personal goals and become successful in their daily functioning in the second language or EFL environments" (p. 445). It is important to note that cultural education cannot be separated from teaching other language skills or the essential competencies: reading, listening, writing, and speaking on all levels, from A1 to C2. Hinkel also claims that "what represents polite ways of speaking and the appropriate ways of writing an essay may depend on culturally dependent concepts that are closely bound up with the linguistic skills needed to speak or write well in the second language" (p.444). In his study, the author also deals with teachers' and students' attitudes towards culture and culture learning. In addition, Kahraman (2016) states that "learners learn and teachers teach what they perceive as important and only that much" (p. 9). He adds that language teachers should serve as flag-bearers who must be well-educated to address the needs of students in today's rapidly changing world. The current global world brings many new challenges, one of which is that the world is interconnected, which is naturally rooted in cultures. Although everyone uses the same Internet and communication tools, we are still deeply rooted in our culture with all the consequences it can have on our understanding and communication patterns. This global interculturality leads us to a natural need to develop cultural intelligence. It is the teachers' responsibility as primary educators who are responsible for intercultural competence development of primary, secondary and university students. Cultural intelligence is a "multifaceted competency consisting of cultural knowledge, the practice of mindfulness, and the repertoire of behavioral skills" (Thomas & Inkson, 2004, pp. 182-183).

What is the reason for the need for intercultural competence? The cultural intelligence theory indicates that individuals with a high level of cultural intelligence abilities have a higher level of intercultural engagement in any situation with cultural diversity (Ng et al., 2009). In the same way, Earley and Ang (2003), Ng et al. (2009), and Thomas (2006) highlight that cultural intelligence ability allows the person to interact with different cultures, which is a skill highly needed and even financially remunerated in global companies.

As a fundamental tool to be used to increase intercultural competence, Baker (2011) recommended the identification of diverse cultural groups using different kinds of learning activities. Rafieyan et al. (2015) mentioned a significant relationship between cultural intelligence and pragmatic comprehension in English-language programs. Rafie et al. (2016) discovered a unique predictive relationship between cultural intelligence and listening skills among students. On the other hand, Ivanova and Doncheva **(2019)** shed light on how students with cultural diversity can study and accept other foreign cultures, such as English culture. Finally, they investigated the social and educational problems that students may face in a multicultural environment.

In summary, intercultural competence is a crucial competence not only in managerial education, leading to increased business opportunities, but also for everyday life as it improves tolerance and mutual understanding, so much needed in today's world.

Methodology

Research Design

To yield reliable results while answering the research questions, the study followed an experimental design where one group of students is exposed to documentary videos while teaching students the cultural items in their prescribed English language book, i.e., the experimental group. The experiment was conducted between the 7th of October and the 22nd of November 2020. The use of documentary videos was applied only to the experimental group. In contrast, the control group followed the standard class procedures with the prescribed book without focusing on cultural aspects of their development. The data were collected by applying cultural intelligence questionnaire based on the ideas of the Cultural Intelligence Center (The Cultural Intelligence Scale, 2005), to both experimental and control groups just at the end of the experiment, see Appendix. Printed forms of the questionnaire were submitted to the students. No personal data were collected. All the questionnaires were anonymous.

Participants

The study participants were fifth-grade primary students from Zain Al-Abideen Primary school primary school at Diyala Province, Iraq. The research sample consisted of sixty students divided into two groups, i.e., the experimental and control, with thirty students each. The researchers tried to equalize the two groups according to the respondents' age, the parents' background, and their living standards. First, the researchers informed the school management about the plan to conduct the intervention in the classes; then, the students were informed that they would be part of an experiment to implement a new technique in their English classes, and the written consent was obtained from their parents. The experiment was approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Hradec Kralove no. 2/2021. The researcher and the school staff paid particular attention to ensuring the application of all ethical considerations regarding the students.

Instruments

This study used four documentary videos to help the respondents from the experimental group to learn more about foreign cultures they studied. The researchers chose four passages that dealt with cultures from their prescribed book of English including the cultures of the following countries: Oman, Lebanon, England, and India. In each lesson, they showed the students the video related to the culture they were studying; then, they implemented activities from their textbooks for the rest of the class. To begin with, the teacher showed the students the documentary video first, then summarized the content and commented on it. A five-minute discussion followed this summary, after which the teacher repeated basic facts from the video. Finally, even though the students listened attentively to the video, the teacher asked whether they had difficulties in understanding or had some questions about the video content.

The use of videos represented a brainstorming step before the beginning of studying the material in the textbook, which was interesting for them and created some introduction to the lesson. After the four-week experiment was over, the cultural intelligence questionnaire was used to measure the effect of using documentary videos on students. The questionnaire was adapted from The Cultural Intelligence Scale (2005) from the Cultural Intelligence Center. The researchers used it to measure cultural intelligence of the students and its improvement. There were metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral scale measures dimensions and as this is a pilot study, it can be further developed and used in a much larger scale experiment. Face validity was applied to the adapted tool, where the items and the study plan were exposed to a group of specialists in English language teaching at both universities. All the experts agreed on the items' suitability to the study context and the subject under investigation.

After the questionnaire data were collected, the researchers interviewed each participant separately to know the specific attitudes of the students towards using the documentary videos in teaching culture. The researchers asked the participants four yes/no questions orally after the experiment. The researchers used only four simple questions since the participants were young:

1. Do you like using documentary videos in class?
2. Do you prefer traditional reading activities, discussing cultural topics or using videos in class?
3. Do you think documentary videos help you understand the topic well?
4. Do you like to use videos in other subjects?

These questions focused on the respondents' subjective feelings and opinions, and they all added personal experience and enjoyment, which must be considered crucial in any learning trajectory. These questions were asked in a friendly manner so that the participants were not afraid of answering them openly. The researchers developed a friendly atmosphere to obtain as reliable results as possible. The participants were put in small groups to discuss the issues as they were formulated in the questionnaire in detail and share their opinions. The researchers only observed their discussion while taking notes.

Results

The study results can be divided into two sections: First, the results of the questionnaire, and second, the interview results. After applying a t-test to experimental and control groups, the results showed that the experimental group's mean score was 25.33 while that of the control group was 19.87. The standard deviation of the two groups was 4.365 for the experimental group and 1.889 for the control group. The computed t-value was 6.295. This means that there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups in favor of the experimental group.

Variable	Groups	No.	M	SD	T-value Computed	T-value Table	Df	Results
Cultural intelligence	Experimental	30	25.33	4.365	6.295	2	58	Significant
	Control	30	19.87	1.889				

Table 1. Results of the questionnaire t-test

The second stage of the data collection was the guided interview that generated results regarding the questions focused on students' attitudes toward using documentary videos in teaching culture. The researchers used only four questions as the students were young, which may not allow for more questions. The results of the four questions clearly show that the students had very positive attitudes toward teaching culture using documentaries, up to 97%. The affirmative answer to Question 1 was 96%, and only 4% was negative. This shows that all students enjoyed watching videos, and it was motivating for them to start the lesson with a documentary video.

The answers to Question 2 favored the implementation of using videos in class - 95% of the participants preferred the use of videos, whereas 5% preferred only the textbook. Regarding the third question, 99% of the respondents felt the videos helped them understand the topic. Finally, the answers to Question 4 revealed that 95% of the participants also preferred the use of videos in other subjects.

Discussion

The results of the present study corroborate the claim that using documentary videos positively affects students' cultural intelligence, confirmed objectively by the standardized test and subjectively by the students´ feedback, which was highly positive. If it is possible to achieve high levels of student satisfaction, it will naturally lead to increased motivation and, thus, improved performance. There is enough research supporting this statement, and this study should initiate a broader discussion among educators dealing with curricula reforms and improvement. The findings show that students have positive attitudes toward using documentary videos when learning about culture. Videos motivate students to discover more details about new cultures and to intentionally develop their cultural knowledge, intelligence, and intercultural communication patterns.

The enhancement of the students' cultural intelligence may be due to the kind of documentary videos used in teaching the cultural aspects that exist in their textbooks of English which are full of music, colors, clarifications, and documents.

Moreover, the participants' intercultural skills improved significantly even when the experiment lasted a short time. The participants showed more acceptance and respect for their peers whose cultural background was different. They became aware of cultural differences because their intercultural competence enhancement had significantly improved, which can be explained by the type of documentary videos. They included positive scenes, snapshots, and manifestations of each culture. This way of teaching increases students' curiosity towards discovering new cultures, so they show more motivation and interest towards reading about other cultures which can lead to improving their cultural intelligence.

Students at this critical age (11-12) are very flexible and they can accept almost any stimulus so that the teacher can help them to be more open towards others, different opinions and expectations, such as the issues naturally connected to otherness, which is present in any culture. Therefore, their cultural awareness can be developed relatively easily regarding the global situation of interculturality. There could be one more explanation for this result. The participants' answers to this study's second question show that most students have more positive attitudes toward using documentary videos than the cultural texts in their English books. Furthermore, since students are used to being exposed to various digital media, traditional print texts may have lost their significance: thus, videos are more motivating to these young learners.

It is worth mentioning that this study comes in line with what Rafieyan et al. (2015) and Rafie et al. (2016) found in their research regarding the positive effects of different English language programs on raising students' cultural intelligence. This study develops their argumentation and partially verifies their claims. However, this research is the ground for a larger-scale experiment because this issue needs to be studied in-depth and with a larger sample to eliminate any potential bias.

Conclusions

The study shows the positive impact of cultural documentary videos used in EFL class since students appreciated them. Moreover, the study objective results also proved the claim that the impact of videos is higher on young learners since they are more digitally and visually oriented. Therefore, any media used in L2 acquisition and intercultural enhancement programs may be better accepted by the students than the

traditional ways of conveying information. Consequently, these findings must be considered by course designers, educators, and all professionals involved in language learning.

There are several limitations to this study. First, the research sample was relatively small but sufficient, and it can be the basis for much broader scale studies that could verify the current findings. A second limitation is geographical as involving various countries may provide more accurate results. The final limitation is related to the participants' similar age. Therefore, it is necessary to include students of different age groups. Finally, this study does not attempt to be definite but the seed for future research.

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Appendix

Cultural intelligence Questionnaire (CQ)

Metacognitive CQ

1. I am conscious of the cultural knowledge I use when interacting with people with different cultural backgrounds.
2. I adjust my cultural knowledge as I interact with people from a culture that is unfamiliar to me.
3. I am conscious of the cultural knowledge I apply to cross-cultural interactions.
4. I check the accuracy of my cultural knowledge as I interact with people from different cultures.

Cognitive CQ

1. I know the legal and economic systems of other cultures.
2. I know the rules (e.g., vocabulary, grammar) of other languages.
3. I know the cultural values and religious beliefs of other cultures.
4. I know the marriage systems of other cultures.
5. I know the arts and crafts of other cultures.
6. I know the rules for expressing nonverbal behaviors in other cultures.

Motivational CQ

1. I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures.
2. I am confident that I can socialize with locals in a culture that is unfamiliar to me.
3. I am sure I can deal with the stresses of adjusting to a culture that is new to me.
4. I enjoy living in cultures that are unfamiliar to me.
5. I am confident that I can get accustomed to the shopping conditions in different cultures.

Behavioral CQ

1. I change my verbal behavior (e.g., accent, tone) when a cross-cultural interaction requires it.
2. I use pause and silence differently to suit different cross-cultural situations.
3. I vary the rate of my speaking when a cross-cultural situation requires it.
4. I change my nonverbal behavior when a cross-cultural situation requires it.
5. I alter my facial expressions when a cross-cultural interaction requires it.